

What Does Resistance Look Like?

How Black Illinoisans Used Churches to Build Community and Resist Oppression in the 19th Century

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Skills Addressed

The following suggestions draw from multiple skills identified in the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework. The table below represents some of the skills highlighted here. The full framework of NCSS skills can be viewed [here](#).

D2.His.3.9-12	Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.
D2.His.5.9-12	Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people's perspectives.
D2.His.7.9-12	Explain how the perspectives of people in the present shape interpretations of the past.
D2.His.12.9-12	Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to pursue further inquiry and investigate additional sources.
D2.His.14.9-12	Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.
D2.His.16.9-12	Integrate evidence from multiple relevant historical sources and interpretations into a reasoned argument about the past.

1) Religion and Resistance

Central Questions/ Theme	Illinois Web Project	Sub-themes	Activities/Lesson Suggestions for Students	Sources (links)
How did the Black Church in 19th century Illinois engage in active and/or implicit resistance against discrimination? How did Black Churches in the 19th century foster activism and leadership?	Explore these questions by looking at the AME Church and/or the Black Baptist Church in Illinois. Students can explore church activities, programs, and possibly religious documents to answer the questions.	Activism Worship Community Institution Building	L1) Students read and discuss exhibit pages that highlight churches as sites of community building and resistance. L2) Outside the exhibit: Students find and analyze ONE of the following documents and explore how it impacted Black migrants to and/or residents of Illinois 1) AME Review 2) Newspaper Article 3) Any of the primary or secondary sources from the site.	Chicago Black churches: https://coloredconventions.org/black-illinois-organizing/chicago/churches/ AME and Black Baptist Churches across IL: https://coloredconventions.org/black-illinois-organizing/foundations/founding-independent-churches/ Brief history of the AME Church: https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/religious/african-methodist-episcopal-a-m-e-church/ Black church organizing in the Civil War Era: https://www.pbs.org/thisfarbyfaith/print/journey3.html

Broader Themed Ideas/Suggestions:

What are some churches/religious leaders today that engage in social justice work in the city of Chicago, the state of Illinois, and nationally?

2) Churches, Religion, and Education

Central Questions/ Theme	Illinois Web Project	Subthemes	Activities/Lesson Suggestions for Students	Sources (links)
How did church communities develop schools for Black children in Illinois in the 19th century? How did church-based education help empower the Black community to take action?	Investigate why public education was not open to Black children in many areas of Illinois. Consider how Baptist and Methodist churches established schools for Black children in their communities. Analyze connections between access to education and mobilizing for justice in Illinois.	Activism Education Community Institution Building	L1) Students explore the <u>Foundations of Protest: Establishing Schools</u> section of the website and research 2-3 cities and the schools/educational programs that were established. Students may consider 1) how the school was founded 2) what was taught and who attended 3) legacy of the school	Foundations of Protest: Establishing Schools: https://coloredconventions.org/black-illinois-organizing/foundations/establishing-schools/ African Americans demanding equal access to public education: https://coloredconventions.org/black-illinois-organizing/foundations/petitioning-for-justice-in-public-education/ Mary Mann, a pathbreaking Black educator in Chicago: https://coloredconventions.org/black-illinois-organizing/delegates/mary-mann/
Broader Themed Ideas/Suggestions: Consider gender. How were Black women included and/or excluded in the fight for formal education? Consider ongoing relationships between church organizations and schools/education.				

3) Women, Gender, and Resistance

Central Questions/ Theme	Illinois Web Project	Subthemes	Activities/Lesson Suggestions for Students	Sources (links)
1) How did Black women and men play different roles in 19th-century Black churches? 2) In what ways did Black women face discrimination or limitations on their activities in churches? 3) How did Black women take action to deal with the limitations they faced?	Explore web pages that focus on women's roles in Black churches, particularly in fundraising and community building. For further exploration, students may investigate primary and secondary sources, including those on the website, that chronicle Black women's involvement in domestic labor, church activities, and child rearing.	Sexism Gender discrimination Women's Empowerment Leadership Domesticity and agency	L1) Students read and discuss exhibit pages that highlight women's roles in churches and in other aspects of Black life in the nineteenth century. L2) Beyond the Illinois website, students explore other Colored Conventions Project web exhibits and consider how women and their history are represented.	Women's church-related organizing in Illinois: https://coloredconventions.org/black-illinois-organizing/foundations/women-s-organizing/ How churches provided a foundation for Black women's activism in the twentieth century. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/arts/black-women-were-vital-to-the-black-church-here-are-2-stories

Broader Themed Ideas/Suggestions

Teachers may invite students to examine changes in gender relations within the AME Church over the past 20 years, particularly the election of female Bishops and the growing number of female pastors. https://nmaahc.si.edu/object/nmaahc_2012.141.25

Students may interview an older woman in their own life about their experiences with gender in religious organizations or other areas of life.

How have students seen gender roles differ in religious communities they're aware of? Where do these differences come from?